| Year | Number of foreign tourists arrival to India | Number of foreign tourists who visited Taj Mahal |
|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 2537282 | 249267 |
| 2002 | 2384364 | 171035 |
| 2003 | 2750290* | 250716 |

*Estimated

(b) On an average time spent by a tourist on the Centrally protected ticketed monuments including Taj Mahal is about one to two hours.

(c) Taj Mahal is a world heritage monument and it has always been the endeavour of Governments that more and more tourists visit this wonder of the world. Coinciding with completion of 350 years of its glorious existence, the Government of Uttar Pradesh has decided to celebrate the year 2004-05 as the International Year of the Taj commencing from World Tourist Day *i.e.*, 27th September 2004 to present Taj Mahal and surrounding sites as most preferred destination of the year. It is hoped that with increase in tourist flow, expenditure by tourists will also go up.

**Ecotourism**

1441. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of unlocking forests for controlled tourism for the first time;

(b) if so, whether Government have finalised the set of comprehensive guidelines on ecotourism;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to involve private players in this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Tourists are already allowed to visit Wild-Life Sanctuaries and National Parks in the country in a regulated manner. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has formulated Eco Tourism Policy and Guidelines, which have been circulated to all the State Governments/Union Territories and tourism trade. The

policy stipulates that Tourism should help to preserve, retain and enrich our world-view and life-style, our cultural expressions and heritage in all its manifestations. The development process should meet the following cardinal principles:

(i) It should involve the local community and lead to the overall economic development of the area.

(ii) It should identify the likely conflicts between resource use for tourism and the livelihood of local inhabitants and attempt to minimise such conflicts.

(iii) The type and scale of tourism development should be compatible with the environment and sociocultural characteristics of the local community.

(iv) It should be planned as a part of the overall area development strategy, guided by an integrated land-use plan and associated with commensurate expansion of public services.

(d) The Government as well as the private sector have to follow a set of Guidelines for the successful development of tourism.

**Decline in Domestic and International Tourist Traffic**

1442. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any sudden decline in domestic and international tourist traffic to Jammu and Kashmir this year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of domestic foreign tourists expected to visit Jammu and Kashmir during the current year; and

(d) the foreign exchange likely to be earned during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Doest not arise.

(c) As per the estimates of Government of Jammu and Kashmir, about 66.80 lakhs domestic and foreign tourists are expected to visit the State during the year 2004.